

# Central America and Mexico Gang Assessment

## Annex 4: Southern and Northern Borders of Mexico Profile<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Note that this version of the USAID Central America and Mexico Gang Assessment was edited for public distribution. Certain sections, including specific country-level recommendations for USAID Missions, were omitted from the Country Profile Annexes. These recommendations are summarized in the Conclusions and Recommendations Section of this assessment.



## **Acknowledgments**

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## Historical Context

Over the last two decades, Mexico has undergone a profound political transition, spurred largely by electoral reforms. The defeat of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in the 2000 presidential elections was a watershed moment for the country, as President Vicente Fox's National Action Party ousted the PRI from 71 years of unbroken Mexican rule. Since then, Mexico has seen an evolution in many of its institutions, including more independence for the media, the weakening of the dominant political party, and dismantling of a controlling state apparatus.

Despite the advances that have been made, government corruption and impunity still weaken the country. The police and military are under state control, and corruption persists throughout police ranks. Despite the government's general respect for human rights, there are still many problems, especially in Guerrero, Chiapas, and Oaxaca. In 2004, for example, state law enforcement officials were accused of unlawful and vigilante killings and disappearances. Mexico has the highest incidence of kidnapping in the world, with an unofficial estimate of 3,000 kidnappings during 2004, some with alleged police involvement.<sup>2</sup>

Mexico is the world's tenth largest economy, with a mixture of modern and traditional industry and agriculture that is increasingly dominated by the private sector. In 1994, Mexico adopted the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which tripled Mexico's trade with the United States and Canada. Mexico also has 12 free trade agreements with over 40 countries. As a result, the economy has expanded in recent years. Leading growth sectors include seaports, railroads, telecommunications, electricity generation, natural gas distribution, and airports. Leading exports include petroleum and manufactured and assembled products (electronics and consumer goods).

Economic growth has brought mixed results to Mexico's 106 million people. The gross domestic product (GDP) was expected to grow by 4 percent during 2005. Average manufacturing wages increased by 1.2 percent during 2003, less than the 3.98 percent rate of inflation in the same period. An estimated 25 percent of the population resided in rural areas where subsistence agriculture was common. Currently, the per capita income of Mexico is one-fourth that of the United States, and income distribution remains highly unequal. In 2002, the top 10 percent of the population earned 36 percent of total income, while the bottom 20 percent earned an estimated 4 percent.<sup>3</sup>

Violent crime is a critical issue. At the national level, the rate of homicides varies between 11 and 14 per 100,000 people, depending on data from the justice or health sectors.<sup>4</sup> This places Mexico slightly above the category of 10 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, which the World Health Organization considers "epidemic." The highest

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<sup>2</sup> State Department Report, Human Rights report. 2005

<sup>3</sup> U.S. State Department, Bureau for Human Rights, Country Report, Mexico, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> [www.seguridadpublicaenmexico.org.mx](http://www.seguridadpublicaenmexico.org.mx)

incidence of reported deaths were in Estado de México (5,798), Chiapas (1,793), Oaxaca (1,568), Distrito Federal (1,535), and Veracruz (1,453).<sup>5</sup> Politically motivated violence continues to occur throughout the country, particularly in the Southern States of Chiapas, Guerrero, and Oaxaca.

Narco-trafficking continues to be a thorn in the government's side. Drug cartels are active along the U.S.-Mexican border. Gangs are also present along the border, in what appears to be collaboration with various drug cartels. Not surprisingly, the northern border is also considered the most dangerous place in the country for journalists. Many are targeted by drug traffickers working with corrupt law enforcement personnel. In 2004, Roberto Javier Mora, editorial director for the Nuevo Laredo-based daily *El Mañana* and Francisco Javier Ortiz Franco, a lawyer and co-editor of the Tijuana-based weekly newspaper *Zeta*, were killed by gunmen. Apparently, Ortiz was killed in retaliation for an article that revealed details and identities behind a scheme to obtain fake police credentials for members of the Arellano Felix drug cartel.<sup>6</sup>

The issue of police corruption and collusion with drug cartels has been an ongoing problem. Some 400,000 police are employed in the country. The military loans some 5,000 personnel to the Federal Preventive Police (PFP) for counter-narcotics activities. Despite efforts to reform the police, there continue to be reports of human rights abuses and police involvement in kidnappings and extortion. In an attempt to keep themselves safe, citizens and business owners employ 75,000 private security guards annually. Attempts to investigate allegations of police corruption are often met with more corruption and inefficiency. Even as judicial reforms move forward, there are still challenges with arbitrary and sometimes lengthy pretrial detention, lack of due process, and judicial inefficiency and corruption.

Although Mexican laws prohibit the trafficking of persons, the problem persists, with much trafficking involving children and women who are often sold into prostitution. There have been credible reports that police, immigration, and customs officials are involved in trafficking. In 2004, the Fox government had 12 cases in progress against trafficking organizations in various states. Some 664 suspects had been detained for trafficking-related offenses as of September of that year. During the same period, the government reported the rescue of 2,747 victims.

Immigration is an important issue along Mexico's southern and northern borders. The number of migrants detained along the southern border of Mexico is seldom reported in the United States. During the first ten months of 2005, the following nationalities were detained on Mexico's southern border by Instituto Nacional de Migracion:

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Chinese	556
Cuban	375
Ecuadorian	575
<b>El Salvadoran</b>	<b>15,166</b>
Ethiopian	70
<b>Guatemalan</b>	<b>46,842</b>
<b>Honduran</b>	<b>23,000</b>
<b>Nicaraguan</b>	<b>1,299</b>

This does not include the approximate 200,000 illegal migrants detained in other parts of Mexico during the same period.<sup>7</sup>

## Nature of the Gang Phenomenon in Mexico

There are no official statistics in Mexico on the number of crimes committed by gangs.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, most of the information provided on gang involvement in crime is difficult to confirm, as decentralized record keeping means that data is not necessarily consistent from one state to the next. Government authorities have no consistent figures on the number of active gang members in the country. For example, the recently named Minister for Public Security, Eduardo Medina Mora, has stated that there are 5,000 MS-13 members in Mexico.<sup>9</sup> The Guatemalan National Police, the Mexican police, and the Consejo Municipal de Seguridad Pública from Tapachula all agree that in the southern border towns, at least 200 gangs of MS-13 and 18th Street gangs, with some 3,000 members, both Mexican and Central American, are operating. The Secretaria de Seguridad Publica claims there are up to 15,000 members of Barrios 18 in Mexico and that the gang is present in 24 Mexican States. While these figures vary, they collaboratively confirm a gang presence in Mexico.

Recent media reports of the arrival of the *maras* from Central America also tend to demonstrate the presence of MS-13 or 18th Street gangs in the country. In November 2004, the Mexican press reported a gun battle between MS-13 and 18th Street gangs during the commemoration of Mexico's revolution. The municipal police rounded up 34 members of these groups. All were Mexican nationals.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with official at the Instituto Nacional de Migracion. Tapachula. December 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Anuarios Estadísticos de las 32 entidades federativas elaborados por el INEGI; Cuadernos de Estadísticas Judiciales en Materia Penal elaborados anualmente por el INEGI y los Informes de Gobierno que anualmente rinde el Presidente de la República.

<sup>9</sup> "Ubica SSP 5 mil Maras en México", en: *Reforma*, 3 de octubre de 2005.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.esmas.com/noticierostelevisa/mexico/407564.html>

MS-13 and 18th Street gangs in southern Mexico allegedly traffic in drugs and persons. MS-13 apparently has gained control over the trafficking of illegal immigrants along this border, where some 95 percent enter illegally on their way to the United States.

The press has reported many accounts of *mara* activity in the south of Mexico, although it is difficult to confirm this information. Information reported by the press includes stories about the police operation, *Operativo Costa*, which resulted in the arrest of 167 gang members in 2004. Some new accounts report that 365 gang members from MS-13 and 18th Street gangs have been arrested. Others mention that 70 percent of those detained are Mexican, while 12 percent are Salvadoran, 9 percent are Guatemalan, and 1 percent are Nicaraguan. Supposedly, 54 percent are under 18 years of age and some 46 percent are 18-26. The Secretaria de Seguridad Publica has a permanent anti-gang operation called Operacion ACERO that dates back to 2003. This operation has been implemented one time each year during the last three years and has detained 179 gang members.

Other press accounts describe the rivalries among various drug cartels involving the El Chapo cartel and the cartels from the Gulf (Osiel Cárdenas Guillén cartel), Tijuana (Benjamín Arellano Félix cartel) and Ciudad Juárez (Carrillo Fuentes cartel). Interesting to note are various accounts of El Chapo hiring MS-13 gangsters to combat the rival cartels, while other accounts describe the Tijuana and Juarez cartels using MS-13 members to fight El Chapo. The validity of these accounts is impossible to corroborate. Throughout the assessment, the field team repeatedly heard that gang members from the United States were working for the various cartels. One specific example alluded to Logan Height and Mafia Mexicana (EME) gang members working for Arellano Felix in Baja, California. Along the Texas border, there was much mention of the Los Aztecas and the Mexicles gangs—both based in the United States—working as hired guns and drug runners for the Juarez and Gulf cartels.<sup>11</sup> Matamoros was anecdotally mentioned as a city with a concentration of MS-13, but the field team did not visit the city and cannot corroborate the claim made by a local gang member in Ciudad Juarez.

Others reported that the gang situation on the northern border seems to involve the drug cartels using gangs to provide specific services. Criminal activity seems confined to the trafficking of drugs and people. Gangs, where they do exist, seem to be at the service of established drug cartels like Arellano Felix and the Osiel Cárdenas Guillén. This link between gangs and drug cartels implies increased gangs participation in organized criminal activity. As a former gang member from Nuevo Laredo explained to the assessment team, “There are no more gangs here. What exists now is more dangerous than gangs. The gang member obeys orders from drug cartels. The gangs used to fight for territory, culture, and identity. Now the cartels recruiting them just fight for power and money.”

Information from universities, think tanks, and the media suggests that the cities of Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, and Nuevo Laredo are home to established and aspiring gang

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<sup>11</sup> Interviews conducted in Tijuana, San Diego, Ciudad Juarez, El Paso and Nuevo Laredo, October 2005.

members. In Nuevo Laredo, local authorities reported that two MS-13 members were arrested last year. They mentioned to the team that some years ago there were more gangs than there presently are; many of the older but minor-gang members have now joined criminal organizations. The information provided by local authorities and experts states that there are currently 24 gangs operating in Nuevo Laredo. In Ciudad Juárez, the problem of gangs is more evident and more widely recognized. It is estimated that there are about 320 active gangs, with 17,000 gang members in Ciudad Juárez,<sup>12</sup> although only 30 gangs are considered responsible for the most serious crimes, while the remaining gangs are mainly dedicated to petty crime, robbery, or vandalism. According to local officials in Ciudad Juarez, the problem of gangs is related to the fact that 30 percent of teenagers ages 12 to 15 do not attend school or work. Local authorities also relate this fact to the lack of public investment in education, since the number of secondary schools is not sufficient for the resident school-age population.

The gang phenomenon on the northern border is quite different from the rest of Central America or even other parts of Mexico. For the most part, these gangs could be categorized as “generational” gangs, some with 40-50 year histories. Many family members have belonged to these gangs, crossing over generational lines. It is not uncommon for a youth to be in a gang today that his father or uncle belonged to.

Incarcerated gang members are not necessarily inactive members. The proliferation of gangs in Los Angeles and the further consolidation of gang norms and practices extended to the border cities during the late 20th century. Moreover, the California prison system has been the origin of gang proliferation and led to the development of the Mafia Mexicana (Mexican Mafia). All gangs south of Bakersfield must pay homage to the Mafia Mexicana once in the California prison system. The *tregua de sur* (truce of the south), as it is called, is characterized by those southern gangs, including the MS-13 and 18th Street gangs, taking their orders from the Mafia Mexicana.<sup>13</sup> Lately, there is evidence of a rupturing of this purported truce, and the MS-13 and 18th Street gangs in Guatemala supposedly broke the prison truce in 2005. Moreover, as more gangs align themselves with different rival drug cartels, the potential for more confrontation among gangs is a possibility.

The overall socioeconomic situation on the northern and southern borders is problematic. In the border towns of Tijuana, Ciudad Juarez, and Nuevo Laredo, many youths and adults are using drugs, particularly heroin. Drugs are readily available in little stores (*tienditas*) that are found in these cities. Ciudad Juarez is experiencing a serious heroin addiction problem, with many repeat offenders incarcerated for drug possession.

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<sup>12</sup> This figure is an estimate of the number of gang members in Ciudad Juarez based on an interview held in the Direccion de Prevencion Municipal office. October 2005. Gang member numbers were difficult obtain and substantiate in the other northern border towns visited by the Assessment Team.

<sup>13</sup> The *tregua del sur* is a prison pact in which all southern gangs like the MS-13 and Barrio 18 that operate south of Bakersfield must respect each other when in prison. They come under the umbrella of the Mafia Mexicana, which is the supreme gang in California on the street and in prison.



The growth of *maquilas* (assembly plants) in Ciudad Juárez has created a dramatic urbanization of the city without proper planning and service delivery. This rapid expansion has resulted in large numbers of immigrants from Mexico and Central America arriving to work in this industry. Often, both parents and single parents enter the *maquila* labor force, and children grow up unsupervised or with little parental involvement. Although no reliable statistics are available, the dropout rate from primary and secondary school appears to be high for these locations. These at-risk youths are much more susceptible to recruitment by youth gangs, which serve as the training ground for more established gangs that have links with drug cartels. This dire situation has created more opportunities for criminality to prosper, and subsequently violent deaths have been on the increase. From January to October 2005, there were 355 violent deaths in Tijuana, 152 in Nuevo Laredo, and 187 in Ciudad Juárez.<sup>14</sup> In Ciudad Juárez, 28 out of 187 the deaths that occurred in 2005 were attributed to gang members.

An increase in drug use was explained by many as a consequence of the tightening of the borders by the United States beginning in the early 1990s making it more difficult to transport drugs across the border. Also, many now say that Mexicans are increasingly becoming drug consumers, not merely drug traffickers. Others in law enforcement explain this increase as a spillover effect from the copious amount of drugs now available for trafficking into the United States. More and more young people are used to smuggle drugs into the United States in small amounts so as to avoid detection. Many also point to police collusion in the drug trade on the border.

Northern border tensions continue to rise as concerns for U.S. national security and the safety of U.S. customs and border protection officials are threatened. A recent Department of Homeland Security Officer Safety Alert reports that, “unidentified Mexican alien smugglers are angry about increased security along the U.S./Mexico border and have agreed that the best way to deal with the U.S. Border agents is to hire a group of contract killers.” The alert mentions that MS-13 is the group the smugglers intend to use to conduct the targeted assaults on U.S. border agents. The president of the National Border Patrol Council stated that, “MS-13 has shown that its members have very little regard for human life.”<sup>15</sup>

## **Costs and Impacts of Gang Activity**

### Impacts on Economic and Social Development

A major challenge to determining the costs of gang violence relates to how Mexicans classify the different gangs: as youth gangs, street gangs, or organized criminal groups (*bandas delictivas*). This typology tends to de-emphasize the criminal activity of youth and street gangs. The more serious crimes committed by more sophisticated gangs get

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<sup>14</sup> This last figure does not include the number of women murdered in the area during 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Associated Press. “Smugglers Planning to Kill U.S. Border Agents, Federal Memo Warns.” *San Diego Union Tribune*. January 10, 2006.

classified as *bandas deliticas*, which has a different connotation in Mexico. For that reason, it is not possible to find statistics that disaggregate criminal activities carried out by the different groups. As such, it is nearly impossible to measure the true cost of gang violence. One can infer that violence in general is a drain on national resources, particularly law enforcement and health care, along with lost productivity.

One of the challenges to enumerating gang violence is accurately reporting on gang activity. Tijuana, as an example, is a major tourist venue for United States citizens who come for the weekends to party, buy prescription drugs, or stop on their way to southern Baja, California. The city has a high incidence of criminality involving drugs, prostitution, youth gangs, and the Arellano Felix cartel that controls most of the drug trade. Every weekend, at least one American is incarcerated in Tijuana or loses his or her life there.<sup>16</sup> Despite this, the Chief of Police for Tijuana readily asserts that gangs are nonexistent in the city. This could have a kernel of truth to it, as the drug cartel Arellano Felix is the major criminal player, and the youth or street gangs are insignificant in comparison. In Mexicali, Ciudad Juarez, and Nuevo Laredo, however, the panorama changes drastically. Government officials admit openly that they have a gang problem. Unfortunately, statistics on the cost of violence are not kept, and the information on the number of gangs is difficult to corroborate.

In 2003, the number of intentional homicides totaled 10,087.<sup>17</sup> Of these people killed, 244 were children under age 9; 3,765 were 10-29; and 6,078 were 30 years and older. Those homicides of people 10-29 included 158 deaths of those 10-14; some 860 deaths of those 15-19; another 1,292 of people 20-24; 1,455 of people 25-29.<sup>18</sup> Also, according to the statistics from the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática* (INEGI), 43 percent of those sentenced for federal crimes during 2003 were 16-29 years old, while 54 percent of those in that age group were sentenced for other crimes.

Other delinquencies were committed in 2004. The *Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios sobre la Inseguridad* (ICESI), which records the types of delinquencies committed, reported other delinquencies to include car theft, break-ins, violent robbery, fraud, attacks or threats, sexual offenses, kidnappings, possession of arms, and robbery.

The proliferation of arms within Mexico has contributed to an increase in violent crimes. According to a United Nations report in 2004, Mexico ranked third in Latin America as a result of homicides resulting from guns.<sup>19</sup> It is calculated that 60 percent of homicides in Mexico result from the use of guns. Moreover, 60 percent of the weapons decommissioned by the state are illegal.<sup>20</sup> According to the study, *Armas ligeras y pequeñas: Caso México*, there are 15 million small arms in circulation in Mexico, almost

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<sup>16</sup> U.S. Consular Office, Tijuana, Mexico.

<sup>17</sup> Estadísticas Vitales del Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, (INEGI) 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Small arms survey. *The Small Arms Survey 2004: Rights at Risk*. ISBN-10:0-19-927334-0. Oxford University Press. May 27, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Alejandro Moreno, *Comparación Internacional sobre el impacto social del uso de armas de fuego*, en: [www.diputados.gob.mx/cesop/boletines/no1/4.pdf](http://www.diputados.gob.mx/cesop/boletines/no1/4.pdf)

four times more than the 4,492,692 arms that were registered with the Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional in 2003.<sup>21</sup>

### Impacts on Democratic and Political Development

Not surprisingly, given high levels of corruption and distrust for political institutions, many crimes go unreported. In the Seligson survey for 2004, some two thirds of victims do not report the crime and only 37 percent of Mexicans believe that the judicial system will punish violators. Mexico has the highest levels of criminality in comparison to the other countries dealing with gang problems in Central America, so the fact that most people do not report crimes has an important social cost. This is owed mainly to Mexicans' lack of trust for any institution affiliated to the police.

Although the costs of gang activity cannot be measured in Mexico, there is information that provides a glimpse into the growing problem and the ways that democratic processes could be eroded due to citizen insecurity. When citizens feel more insecure, they are less likely to trust in the police and the justice system.

The perception of the gang problem in Mexico has not reached the level of hysteria as in some Central American countries, though a growing fear of the *maras* is brewing. While there are gangs, their sphere of influence seems linked to the numerous operational drug cartels and other organized crime organizations. The news is mainly with reports about disputes between cartels or confiscation of drug shipments. However, there are frequently reports of gangs, mainly involving the encroachment of MS-13 into the southern part of the country (Tapachula and Tuxtla Gutierrez). These reports describe very violent acts carried out by these gangs and leave the reader with a sense that southern Mexico is in chaos and disorder.

### **Causes and Risk Factors of Gang Activity**

The causes and risk factors for youths joining gangs in the Mexican border regions are similar to those found in other countries. Many Mexican youths do not have access to education and employment opportunities. Others live in overcrowded living conditions, are victims of sexual abuse, become involved in substance abuse, or simply feel social exclusion as do many other marginalized youths in Latin America.

Mexico, though, has two additional causes that are not found in the other countries: (1) opportunities on Mexico's southern border to make money through the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and humans; and (2) the generational gangs found on the northern border.

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<sup>21</sup> Elaborado por Magda Noriega y patrocinado por Oxfam Internacional. (See note in *Reforma*, 19 octubre de 2005, p. 4A).

Regarding the southern border, numerous risk factors coalesce to attract gang members from all of the Central American countries to the Tapachula area. As an example, the *Secretaria de Seguridad Publica* in Tuxtla-Gutierrez told the assessment team that of the 105 Central American MS-13 and 18th Street gang members imprisoned in Chiapas, 20 percent are Guatemalan, 52 percent are Salvadoran, 25 percent are Honduran, and 2 percent are Nicaraguan.

The movement of people, drugs, weapons, and other illegal substances is a major reason gang members come together in the southern border area. Until Hurricane Stan ravaged southern Mexico in October 2005, the Chiapas-Mayab railway line was a major source of income for MS-13. MS-13 allegedly extorted migrants as they attempted to illegally board the train for a ride north. The train is now back in operation.

Enterprising buses called *tijuaneros* are filling part of the transportation demand for travelers heading to the northern border. In an interview with the press, one MS-13 leader stated that their job was now to protect the illegal immigrants, collect their fees, and ensure that no one else harmed them, or they themselves would be killed.<sup>22</sup> According to this purported MS-13 gang leader, the fees are to support “homies” (fellow gang members) in jail, pay their attorney fees, and provide money for food and laundry.

As explained earlier (see “The Nature of the Gang Phenomenon”), Mexico’s proximity to the United States, where the gangs originated, has encouraged the presence of the gangs in cities along Mexico’s northern border for almost 40 years. The causes for gang activity and associated risk factors in this northern border area relate closely to illicit commerce between the United States and Mexico. Gang activity in this part of Mexico is related to drug cartels; the trafficking of drugs, people, weapons, and other illegal substances; the *maquiladora* industry; lack of sufficient educational opportunities for many children of *maquiladora* employees; substance abuse among youths, dysfunctional families; minimal parental supervision; and family traditions to join gangs.

One final factor that contributes to the growth of youth gang members in the northern border area is the movement of individual youths attempting to join relatives in the United States. In 2004, the U.S. Border Patrol caught about 10,000 unaccompanied minors on their way north. Often, when these children’s plans are thwarted and they do not make it to the United States, they find themselves trapped at the border of Mexico as prostitutes, homeless wanderers, or gang members.

## **Current Responses to Gangs**

### **Government Response:**

To date, Mexico has not adopted a national level *anti-mara* law as has El Salvador and Honduras. The *mara*-phobia generated by the press, however, could pave the way for

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www-ni.laprensa.com.ni/archivo/2005/abril/10/nacionales/nacionales-20050410-02.html>

this type of hard-line law enforcement approach. In Tapachula, in the state of Chiapas, after the 2004 confrontation between MS-13 and 18th Street gangs which resulted in the massive deployment of police to the region (according to press reports), the local municipality passed an ordinance similar to the hard-line *anti-mara* laws of Central America, citing that gang members could be detained for illicit association.<sup>23</sup>

Current government programs aiming to deter youths from gang membership are limited. Although the Federal District has implemented one program, its impact has been minimal and it has not reached the stated results. Another program called “*Oportunidades*” with significant outreach in the country provides scholarships for youths and adolescents who have limited resources for remaining in school. The government institution, Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia, (DIF), provides services to street youths and adolescents. A total of 80,355 youths have received DIF services during the last four years, but funding was recently cut back.

### **Civil Society Response:**

According to the Secretariat of Government’s Directorate of Liaison with Social and Civil Organizations there are over 5,300 NGOs registered in Mexico. Many of these NGOs are working on various facets of prevention and rehabilitation. A few of these include:

- *Red Fronteriza Juventud* (REFAJ – Youth Frontier Network) in Ciudad Juárez – focuses on increasing educational and cultural opportunities and preventing drug use;
- *Centro de Asesoría y Promoción Juvenil* (CASA – Youth Assessment and Promotion Center) in Ciudad Juárez – aims to prevent youth violence and marginalization;
- Center Victory Life in Nuevo Laredo – operated by former gang members to rehabilitate gang members;
- *Centro de Integración y Recuperación para Enfermos de Alcoholismo y Drogadicción* (Intergration and Recuperation Center for Drug and Alcohol Addiction) in Tijuana – works to help youths recover from drug and alcohol abuse.

### **Donor Response:**

To date, USAID/Mexico has not directly supported anti-gang activities. However, the new USAID regional strategy for Mexico and Central America will emphasize more responsive and transparent governance; open, diversified, and expanding economies; investments in health and education; and timely and effective crisis response, which will address some of the causes and risk factors associated with gang activities.

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<sup>23</sup> Illicit association describes three or more gang members who are found together in what can be described as a “meeting.” It serves as the justification for police to apprehend and detain gang members who they deem are together. In some ways, illicit association can also be described as “loitering.”

It is not known to what degree other donors are supporting anti-gang responses. The largest donor working with Mexico is the World Bank, followed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The World Bank's 2004 portfolio was \$3.8 billion in commitments. Both World Bank- and IDB-funded activities have seen implementation delays because they require that funds from their loans be administered by the National Bank for Public Works and Services (BANABRAS). The World Bank has a promising \$240 million education program, the School-based Management Project – Phase I, which was ratified with the Mexican Government in late 2005. The World Bank project is justified on the grounds that the net enrollment in secondary school is 53 percent while 89 percent of school-aged children complete primary school. One of the education project's goals is to increase equitable expansion by including disadvantaged schools. Schools in geographic areas with high gang activity and crime may qualify to be included in under this project. Other donors working in Mexico are the Japanese, British Department for International Development, the French, the United Nations, and the European Union. Further investigation is needed to identify synergies between these programs and any anti-gang work considered by USAID.

## **Individuals and Organizations Consulted**

### ***Mexico City:***

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Pablo Gaytán, Academician, Mexico City  
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Mexico City  
Damián Canales, Director General de la Policía Judicial del D.F.  
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Miguel Ordaz, Municipal Judges Coordinator, Municipality of Tijuana  
Jorge Ochoa, Human Rights Officer, Municipality of Tijuana  
Sgt. David Eisenberg, Patrol Division, Chula Vista Police Department  
Brian Stevens, Detective Investigations Crimes of Violence, Chula Vista Police  
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Eduard Brennan, Regional Security Officer, US Consulate General, Tijuana  
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Mario Cuevas, Mexican Cónsul, Mexico Consulate-San Diego  
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Juan Hernandez, Special Agent, Drug Enforcement Administration, US Consulate  
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Javier Salas, Director, Seguridad Pública Municipal, Mexicali  
Alejandro Gonzalez, Seguridad Publica, Mexicali  
Vicente Valenzuela, Seguridad Publica, Mexicali

### ***Nuevo Laredo, Ciudad Victoria, Reynosa:***

Pedro Montelongo, Procuraduría Justicia, Nuevo Laredo  
Oscar Pimentel, Dir. Seguridad Pública, Nuevo Laredo

Prof. Adolfo Rodríguez, Coord. Educ. Nuevo Laredo  
José Montes Núñez, Regional Delegate, National Institute of Migration, Nuevo Laredo  
Raul Gallegos, Dir. Victory Life A.C., Ciudad Victoria  
Juan Perales, Asesor Victory Life A.C., Ciudad Victoria  
Dr. Ronando Barraxa, Univ. Autónoma Tamaulipas, Ciudad Victoria  
Ericka Villanueva, Secretaria Seguridad Pública, Victoria  
Santiago Ortega Meza, Coord. Centro de Atención para Adictos, Reynosa  
Lazaro Fuentes, Dir. Prevención de Delito y Denuncia, Sec. Seg. Pública, Ciudad Victoria  
Martha Hass, Chief of Consular Section, Consulate of the US-Nuevo Laredo

***Ciudad Juarez, El Paso:***

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Cristina Ramos, Dir. Escuela de Mejoramiento Social para Menores, Ciudad Juarez  
Adriana Soto, Procuraduria General de Justicia, Ciudad Juarez  
Ricardo García, Public Security Secretariat, Ciudad Juarez  
Ariel Diaz, Director, Fomento Social  
Abel Martínez, Director, Oficialia Jurídica  
Daniel Ortiz, CIPOL, El Paso  
Francisco Ledesma, State Police El Paso  
Ernesto Moreno, Dir. Sistema Municipal para el Desarrollo  
Sam Camargo, FBI Liaison El Paso  
Donna Blair, General Consul, Ciudad Juarez  
Alberto Castro, Researcher, Universidad Autonoma Ciudad Juarez  
Guillermo Valenzuela, Border Liaison/Constituent Services, for Congressman  
Silvestre Reyes  
Julieta Nuñez, Regional Delegate, National Institute of Migration, Chihuahua State  
Amelia Marquez, U. Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez  
William Cox, Public Defender, El Paso County  
Mark Burtner, Division Chief, Ass. County Attorney, Juvenile Unit, El Paso  
Maria Tabuena, Regional Director, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte  
Teresa Almanda, Director, Centro de Asesoría y Promoción Juvenil, CASA-Ciudad Juárez  
Imelda Marrufo, Director, Coordinator, Centro de Asesoría y Promoción Juvenil, CASA-Ciudad Juárez  
Laura Legarretta, Field Probation Officer, Juvenile Probation Department, El Paso County  
Garcie Simmons, Ass't Field Office Director, US Department of Homeland Security, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, El Paso  
Nelly Diaz, Healthy Communities Coordinator, COMPAÑEROS  
Amelia Marquez, Director, LAZOS  
Enrique Pando Carrasco, Technical Director, Chihuahua State Government  
Ariel Diaz, Director, Fomento Social de la Frontera, Chihuahua Government



***Mexico/Southern Border*** (Tapachula, Ciudad Hidalgo, and San Cristóbal de las Casas):

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Hector Perez Garcia, Coordinador. Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos  
Frontera Sur Tapachula  
Manuel De Jesús Rivera Director Grupo Beta, Instituto Nacional De Migración,  
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Jose L. Cruz Rodriguez, Presidente Comité Consulta y Participación Ciudad  
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Elsa Ortega, Presidenta “Por la Superación de la Mujer A.C”, Tapachula  
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Dora Ines Sanchez, Donald Ramirez, Albergue El Buen Pastor, Tapachula  
Francisco Castillo, Fiscal Regional. Tapachula  
Mariano Rosales, Police General Director San Cristobal de las Casas  
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